Sponsored Scheme of 'Inclusive Education for the Disabled at the Secondary Stage' with an approved outlay of Rs. 1000.00 crore for 11th Plan period. The programme is expected to benefit 5.2 lakh disabled children in the last year of the 11th Five Year Plan. The objective of the Scheme is to create enabling environment for the disabled children passing Class VIII to enter secondary stage for which facilities such as aids and appliances, resource room, removal of architectural barrier, special teachers etc. would be provided. Central assistance will be provided at an average rate of Rs. 3000 per child per annum.

Regulatory authority for higher education

215. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Knowledge Commission has recommended that there should be an independent regulatory authority for higher education and has stated that the legislation for creating universities was a formidable barrier;

(b) if so, what are the other main recommendations made by the National Knowledge Commission;

(c) what is the reaction of the Ministry on its recommendations; and

(d) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) In its report on higher education, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) has also, inter-alia, recommended increasing the number of universities to 1500, raising student fee to at least 20% of the revenues, regulation of higher education through establishment of an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education, financing of higher education (including better management of assets like land available with universities) and public-private partnerships for setting up new institutions, opportunity for good foreign universities to come to India, salary differentials within and between universities, limiting the role of University Grants Commission to disbursement of grants and maintenance. There is no consensus on the recommendations of the NKC. Teachers' Organizations have not favoured the recommendations. A conference of Vice Chancellors held in October, 2007 had also discussed these recommendations without any endorsement thereof.

The Central Government has constituted a Committee under Prof. Yash Pal to, inter-alia, advise on renovation and rejuvenation of higher education. The terms of reference of the Committee includes:-

(a) To review the functioning of the UGC/AICTE and to critically assess the role of the UGC/AICTE and their preparedness to provide institutional leadership to the emerging demands of access, equity, relevance and quality of higher education/ technical education and the university system.

(b) To review the provisions of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 and the All India Council for Technical Education Act 1987 and various suggestions for amendments to the said Acts by earlier Committees such as the Prof. Amreek Singh Committee.

(c) The role of the UGC in coordinating standards of higher education vis-a-vis the functional role of other statutory bodies such as AICTE, MCI, DCI NCI, NCTE, DEC, etc.

(d) An assessment of the requirements of autonomy of the UGC vis-a-vis the Central Government and that of the university system vis-a-vis the UGC.

(e) The role of the UGC/AICTE in determining and enforcing standards of higher education/technical education in State Universities and the possibility of introducing a system of incentives and disincentives so that national standards of higher education/technical education are not compromised or diluted.

International schools

216. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has turned its attention to another important emerging area — international schools and policies governing them;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry intends to give a framework of rules and regulations to the schools which are operating without any proper guidelines;

(c) whether he not only wants their approval to be routed through his Ministry, but is determined to limit the number of foreign teachers in such international schools to 20 per cent of the total strength; and

(d) whether any full/new norms have been prepared for the foreign schools and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHIR MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (d) A committee consisting of representatives of Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, Association of Indian Universities (AIU), Council of Board of School Education (COBSE), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and eminent educationists, was constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in February, 2006 to suggest a policy, inter-alia, regarding setting up of schools affiliated to foreign boards in India and appointment of foreign teachers in such schools. The recommendations of the Committee, inter-alia, relate to designation of a school as 'International' school, affiliation to foreign Boards, permissible limit for appointment of foreign teachers, etc. The recommendations are under consideration of the Government.

Setting up of family courts

217. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state: